

Novel Strategies for Climate Mitigation, Sustainability & Healthy Eating in  
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# One sustainable school food strategy does not fit all –

differences in national school food  
cultures identified in  research

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# Outline of presentation

- Introduction - School food culture and sustainable food
- Differences in national school food culture identified in
  - examples: Finland and Italy
- Conclusions



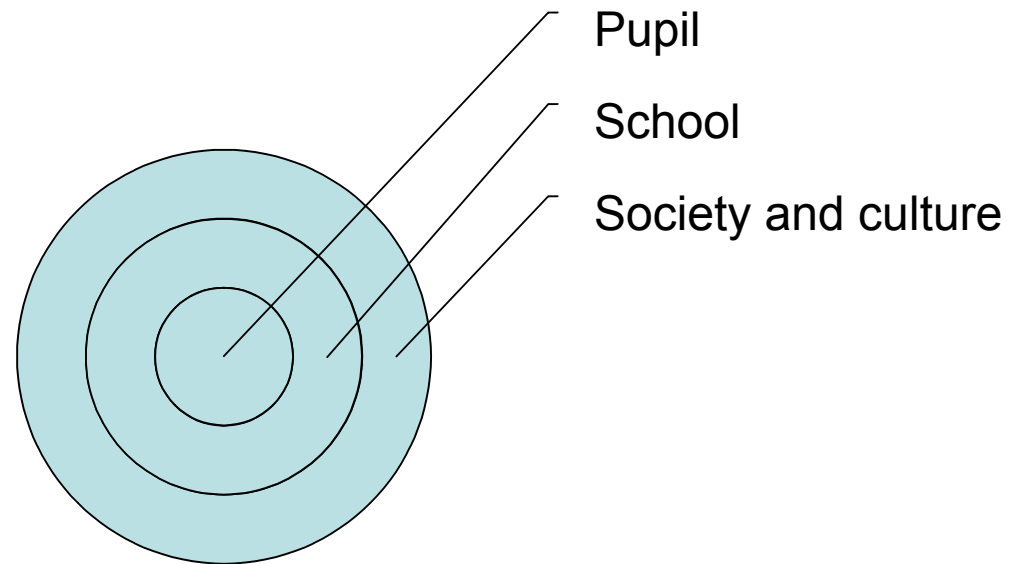
# Introduction

**Food and culture** – food holds the key to any culture. Food is an important marker of cultural identity; people mark their difference from others through shared patterns of food consumption.

”Understanding the complex ways in which social norms, cultural meanings, and economic realities underlie food habits is essential for making successful policy recommendations and for integrating indigenous knowledge into nutritional understandings” (Counihan & van Esterik 1997 “Food and culture”)



# Ecological model



# Introduction

**School food environment** = physical factors that are associated with dietary behaviours of pupils (Cullen et al. 2007, Kubik et al. 2003) = availability of vending machines, snack bars and a la carte lunch programs.

**School culture** = shared beliefs and priorities driving the thinking and actions of people within a school community ([www.schoolculture.com/ideas.html](http://www.schoolculture.com/ideas.html))



# Introduction

**School food culture** = shared beliefs and priorities driving the thinking and actions related to food at school.

School food culture reflects both shared patterns of food consumption, national/local food culture and priorities in schools and education.



# School lunch



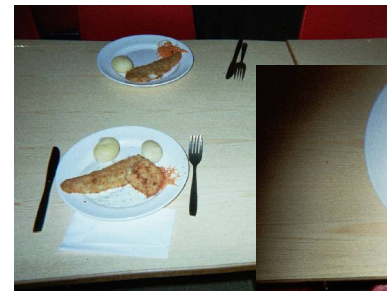
Oslo



Copenhagen



Helsinki



Gothenborg



# Introduction

Food for Life Partnership (UK) provides a **whole school approach to healthy and sustainable eating** with six steps to transform school food culture:

- school meals
- food growing (school garden)
- cooking,
- farm links
- school cooks
- pupil power
- parent power





# Introduction

## 7 principles of sustainable food (Sustainweb)

1. Local, seasonally available ingredients
2. Food from farming systems that minimise harm to environment (certified organic)
3. Limit foods of animal origin
4. Exclude fish species identified as most 'at risk'
5. Fairtrade-certified products
6. Avoid bottled water
7. Promote health and well-being

Waste, energy, water



# iPOPY research

Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway

## Methods:

As part of the iPOPY project national reports describing school meals systems have been published (Bocchi et al. 2003, Hansen et al. 2008, Løes et al. 2008, Mikkola 2008).

Focusgroups – perceptions of organic food and sustainable development among young people in public food services

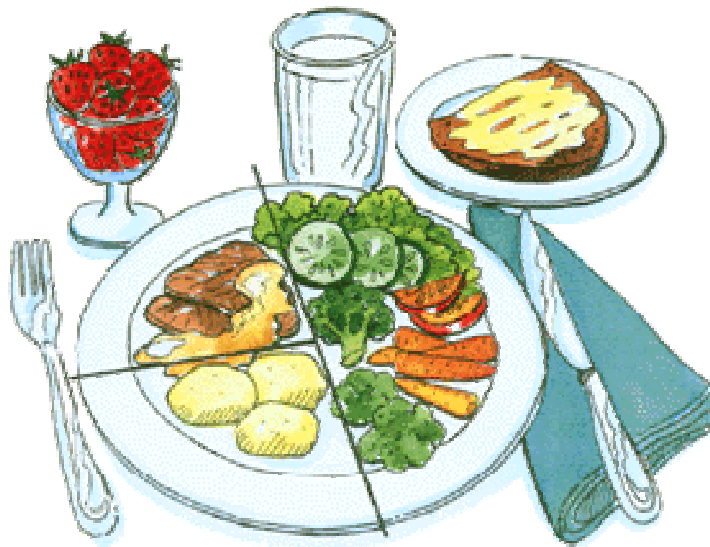
Researchers have visited a few school canteens in these countries and made observations, collected written material (including menus) and performed some short interviews with contractors and kitchen personnel.

# Finland



Self-service





School food  
dietary  
guidelines

Plate model



# 23-27.11.2009



**måndag** *Pyttipanna – hash with potatoes*

**tisdag** *Gröt, saftsoppa, bröd med lördagskorv  
– porridge, berry soup, bread and  
sausage*

**onsdag** *Kyckling i apelsinsås – chicken with  
orange sauce*

**torsdag** *Köttbullar – meat balls*

**fredag** *Knackorvsoppa, bröd – sausage soup,  
bread*

Alla dagar serveras mjölk och bröd, bordsmargarin samt sallad / grönsaker  
– All days milk and bread, margarine and salad/vegetables.

<http://centralskolan.hanko.fi/skolmat.htm>

# Italy



Food served at tables



Dietary guidelines

Food pyramid



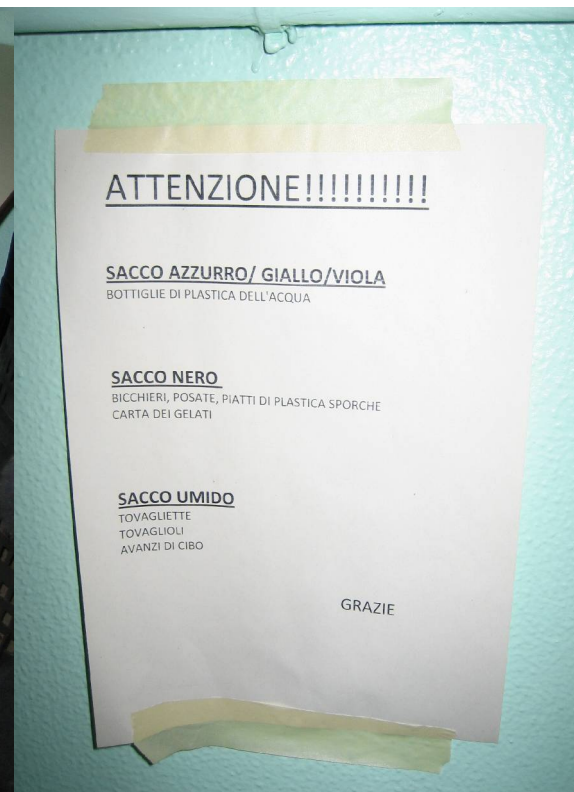


Italy – meals subdivided into four components: first course, second course, vegetables and fruit/dessert.





Waste?



# Conclusions



School food culture and sustainable food strategies – some aspects:

- Guidelines (nutrition, health)
- Shared rules and priorities (school meals as education, welfare or commercial service; food - individual choice or served, etc)
- Eating environment (also use of energy, water, waste)
- Food committee or council at school (planning of menu – food culture and proper meals)
- Employees (communication)
- Evaluation, feedback, customer satisfaction (pupils and parents)
- Responsibility/power

School food cultures are different in iPOPY countries and it is not possible to give one strategy that fits all for how to integrate organic food into school meals.